

TOPIC 17: MEASURING BLOOD PRESSURE**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Two out of three people with diabetes also have high blood pressure or hypertension. High blood pressure causes the heart to work harder, increasing the risk of heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. High blood pressure can also increase the risk of eye and kidney disease. Keeping blood pressure within the target range can help lower the risk of all these problems.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Blood pressure that is higher than the target range can put people with diabetes at risk for heart disease, stroke, eye disease and kidney disease.
2. Keeping your blood pressure under control can be helped by eating a healthy diet that includes reducing salt/sodium intake, regular physical activity, and losing a moderate amount of weight (if you are overweight).
3. Hypertension is a “silent” problem and you may not be aware your blood pressure is high without it being measured.
4. Blood pressure should be monitored/checked at every health care visit and more often outside of clinic appointments as recommended by your doctor.

BACKGROUND

The blood pressure reading has two numbers, the top (systolic) reading and the bottom (diastolic) reading. When blood pressure is high, the heart has to work harder to pump blood. Systole measures blood pressure when the heart beats and diastole measures when the heart relaxes. Hypertension is diagnosed when blood pressure is greater than 140/90.

The American Diabetes Association recommends that people with diabetes keep their blood pressure below 140/80 (said as “140 over 80”). In some cases, as with kidney disease, the recommendation is lower.

People with diabetes should check with their doctor to confirm their blood pressure target goals. Increased blood pressure can contribute to stroke, kidney disease and eye problems. If your blood pressure reading is over 160/100, contact your health care provider for an appointment within one month. If your blood pressure is over 180/110, contact your health care provider to be seen within one week.

You can help prevent or control high blood pressure by following these tips:

- If prescribed, take your blood pressure medications daily.
- Reduce salt and sodium intake. Read labels of packaged foods and use less when cooking or eating.

- Lose weight if needed, or maintain a healthy weight.
- Limit alcohol consumption and ask your doctor about any alcohol use.
- If you smoke, make a plan and get help to quit.
- Engage in some form of moderate physical activity or exercise on most days of the week. Check with your doctor before beginning any new exercise program.
- Work with your doctor to find out the best blood pressure for you.

PATIENT OUTCOMES/GOALS

By the end of the educational session, the client with diabetes will be able to:

- Identify the reasons for maintaining blood pressure within the target range recommended by the health care provider.
- Identify ways to help keep blood pressure within the target range.

CHW ACTIONS	PARTICIPANT ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the participant's blood pressure at each visit and record it on the encounter form. Advise the participant of the reading and whether or not it is in the target range for him/her. • Elicit what the participant is currently doing to manage blood pressure. Problem-solve barriers to managing blood pressure. • Inquire about any medications the participant is taking to manage blood pressure. • Blood Pressure Technique: • Have the participant sit in a chair with his/her left arm resting on a flat surface. • Describe the procedure to the participant. • The blood pressure apparatus has a cuff that is connected to the digital machine by a rubber tube. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the CHW to take a blood pressure reading at each visit. • Tell the CHW what medications you are taking (if any) to manage blood pressure. • Identify what you are doing to help manage your blood pressure. • Problem-solve any barriers to managing your blood pressure. • Track your blood pressure and contact your health care provider if the CHW advises that your reading is higher than your target range. • If prescribed, take your blood pressure medications daily

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap the blood pressure cuff firmly (but not tightly) around the left upper arm about 2 inches above the elbow crease with the arrow on the cuff pointing toward the elbow crease. (If the participant is wearing a heavy sweater or jacket, ask him to remove it before applying the cuff. The reading can be taken over light to moderate weight clothing.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the participant is overweight, use a large size cuff; otherwise use a regular size cuff. • Ask the participant to keep the arm still and to not talk while the blood pressure reading is taken. • Explain that when you turn on the machine, the participant will feel increasing pressure while the cuff inflates and then the cuff will deflate and the pressure will go down. • Push the start button on the digital machine. The cuff will begin to inflate and the numbers on the screen will rise and then fall as the reading is taken. • At the end of the cycle a blood pressure reading will appear on the screen. • Explain the result to the participant and record it on the encounter form. • If the blood pressure is higher than the target range, instruct the participant to contact his health care provider. 	
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TOOLS/TEACHING AIDES

- Blood pressure monitor
- Blood pressure record

HANDOUTS

1. **Topic 17 Coversheet**.....[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
2. **You Can Lower Your Blood Pressure**.....[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
Source: [Public Health – Seattle & King County](#)
3. **Sodium in Foods**.....[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
Source: [Public Health – Seattle & King County](#)
4. **Action Plan**.....[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
Source: [Public Health – Seattle & King County](#)

REFERENCES

Type 2 Diabetes: A Curriculum for Patients and Health Professionals, American Diabetes Association, 2002.

American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/high-blood-pressure-hypertension.html>

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